

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LIMA 00921 312337Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 0921

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TAGS: MPOL, MASS, MORG, PGOV, PE
SUBJECT: US-PERUVAN MILIARY RELATIONS

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1. FOLLOWING RESPONSE KEYED TO PRAS REFTEL 1.
2.A. THIS PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT IS OVERWHELMINGLY
MILITARY (27 OUT OF 28 CABINET -LEVEL POSITIONS ARE
CURRENTLY FILLED BY MILITARY OFFICERS.) THE SCHEDULED
ELECTIONS AND TRANSFER OF POWER TO A CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT
WILL NOT ALTER THE POSITION OF THE ARMED FORCES AS THIS
COUNTRY'S ULTIMATE ARBITER IN BASIC NATIONAL POLICY AND
NATIONAL DECISIONS. FOR AS FAR INTO TH FUTURE AS WE
CAN SEE THE USG WILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE MILITARY IF
WE ARE TO PROTECT AND ADVANCE U.S. INTERESTS IN PERU.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MILITARY-TO-MILITARY
RELATIONSHIP IS PROMOTING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS AND
INFLUCNECING POLICY DECISIONS IS LESS CLEAR RELATIVELY
CLOSE INSTITUTIONAL TIES IN THE PAST WITH U.S. COUNTER-
PART SERVICES HAVE NOT PREVENTED THE PERUVIAN ARMED
FORCES FROM TAKING ACTIONS CONTRARY TO HIGH-PRIORITY USG
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PAGE 02 LIMA 00921 312337Z

POLICIES (AS IN 1962 AND 1968). INSTANCES IN WHICH THE
MILITARY-TO-MILITARY CHANNEL HAS PROVIDED SPECIFIC, DIS-
CERNABLE POLITICAL INFLUENCE ARE DIFFICULT TO IDENTIFY.
NEVERTHELESS, PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN OFFICERS
OF THE TWO COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN HELPFUL TO US OVER THE YEARS
IN TERMS OF
ACCESS, INFORMATION AND ATMOSPHERICS. WE CONCLUDE THAT SOME

MILITARY PRESENCE HERE, ALONG WITH CONTINUED TRAINING AND OTHER EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE TWO MILITARY ESTABLISHMENTS, MUST BE CONSIDERED AS USEFUL IN PRESERVING THE FRAMEWORK FOR NORAML BILATERAL RELATIONS.

THE CRITICAL MILITARY TIE -- THE ARMAMENTS SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP -- WAS, OF COURSE, VIRTUALLY SEVERED SOME YEARS BACK. THE PERUVIAN MILITARY REALIZE THAT THE REESTABLISHMENT OF A SIGNIFICANT SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH US IS MOST UNLIKELY -- AND PROBABLY WOULD CONSIDER IT UNDESIRABLE IN ANY EVENT GIVEN THEIR UNHAPPY EXPERIENCES OF THE PAST. BUT, WE HAVE POINTED OUT PREVIOUSLY, EVIDENCE OF NON-DISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT BY THE U.S. IN TERMS OF CONTINUING TO OFFER TRAINING AND MODEST FMS CREDITS AS LONG AS WE DO THE SAME FOR THE NEIGHBORS IS OF SOME IMPORTANCE TO THE GENERAL RELATIONSHIP.

THE PERUVIAN RELIANCE ON THE SOVIET UNION AND OTHER ARMS SUPPLIERS REDUCES THE POTENTIAL FOR CLOSE COOPERATION WITH US IN QUESTIONS OF HEMISPHERIC DEFENSE. NEVERTHELESS, PERU CONTINUES TO ADHERE TO INTER-AMERICAN DEFENSE AGREEMENTS AND TO PARTICIPATE IN UNITAS. THE EVIDENT DISPOSITION OF THE CURRENT PERUVIAN MILITARY LEADERSHIP TO MOVE TOWARD BETTER MILITARY RELATIONS WITH US SHOULD NOT BE DISCOUNTED. IT IS IN OUR LONG-TERM POLITICAL AND DEFENSE INTERESTS TO ENCOURAGE THAT TREND.

2.B. RELATIONS WITH ALL THREE SERVICES HAVE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LIMA 00921 312337Z

IMPROVED IN RECENT MONTHS AND CAN NOW BE CHARACTERIZED AS GOOD. TIES WITH THE NAVY HAVE BEEN CLOSE ALL ALONG FOR SEVERAL REASONS: TRADITION (THE FIRST U.S. MILITARY MISSION TO PERU WAS NAVY AND THERE IS A LONG HISTORY OF COMBINED NAVAL EXERCISES), AND THE FACT THAT MANY OFFICERS ARE POLITICALLY CONSERVATIVE AND DID NOT ADOPT THE RADICAL ANTI-U.S. STANCE TAKEN BY LEADERS OF THE OTHER SERVICES IN THE EARLY STAGES OF THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT. WHILE RELATIONS WITH THE PERUVIAN AIR FORCE WERE STRAINED BY THE FAP PURCHASE OF SOVIET SU-22'S, THE AP LEADERSHIP NOW INDICATES A DESIRE TO ESTABLISH CLOSER TIES WITH THE USAF. THE CURRENT AIR MINISTER HAS DECLARED HIS DESIRE TO REESTABLISH TRADITIONAL U.S. - PERUVIAN MILITARY RELATIONSHIPS. OUR RELATIONS WITH THE ARMY WERE CONSTANTLY STRAINED, AND AT TIMES NONEXISTENT, AFTER THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT TOOK OVER. THERE HAS BEEN A NOTICEABLE IMPROVEMENT IN THE PAST 18 MONTHS, AS DEMONSTRATED BY THE EXCHANGE OF VISITS OF THE TWO ARMY CHIEFS OF STAFF. SOME ARMY LEADERS TELL US THEY WANT CLOSER TIES WITH THE USG ALONG WITH A REDUCTION IN SOVIET INFLUENCE. THIS ATTITUDE IS NO DOUBT CONDITIONED BY PERU'S FINANCIAL TROUBLES AND THE MORE CONSERVATIVE

CAST OF THE MORALES BERMUDEZ GOVERNMENT. WE BELIEVE THE PERUVIAN MILITARY CURRENTLY REGARD A NORMAL, FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE USG AND OUR MILITARY SERVICES AS IMPORTANT TO PERU'S NATIONAL WELFARE. THEY SEEK TO AVOID THE RELATIVE ISOLATION IN THIS HEMISPHERE THAT THREATENED THE COUNTRY UNDER VELASCO AND THEY HOPE FOR A SUPPORTIVE ATTITUDE IN WASHINGTON AT A TIME OF NATIONAL CRISIS. THE MILITARY RELATIONSHIP IS AN INDICATION TO THEM OF THE STATE OF THE GENERAL BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. IN ADDITION, THEY STILL VALUE THE TRAINING WE OFFER, AS WELL AS CERTAIN TYPES OF TECHNICAL ADVICE AND EQUIPMENT.

2.C. THERE IS LITTLE MORE THAN COULD BE DONE UNDER CURRENT POLICY TO MEET THE TWO COUNTRIES' MUTUAL MILITARY INTERESTS. SIGNIFICANT ARMS TRANSFERS ARE OBVIOUSLY NOT POSSIBLE.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 LIMA 00921 312337Z

SOME FURTHER MODEST INCREASE IN TRAINING WOULD PERHAPS BE DESIRABLE.

2D. ALTHOUGH U.S. TIES WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO BE OF POLITICAL INTEREST TO THE PERUVIAN MILITARY, THE STRICTLY MILITARY INTEREST WILL ALMOST SURELY CONTINUE TO DECLINE AS U.S. EQUIPMENT IS PHASED OUT IN THE THREE SERVICES. U.S. MOBILE TRAINING TEAMS AND GRANT TRAINING WILL CONTINUE FOR A TIME TO MEET SOME PERUVIAN NEEDS AND TO PROMOTE IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONAL CONTACTS. THERE IS INTEREST AMONG THE PERUVIAN ARMED FORCES IN U.S. MILITARY LOGISTICAL SYSTEMS, MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES AND TRAINING METHODS. ASSISTANCE IN THESE AREAS COULD BE BENEFICIAL TO THE RELATIONSHIP. BUT OUR POLICY AGAINST PROVIDING LOGISTICAL SUPPORT FOR EQUIPMENT PURCHASED FROM NON-US. SUPPLIERS IS BOUND TO BE AN INHIBITING FACTOR.

2.E. EXCHANGE PROGRAMS, LEADERSHIP GRANTS, MTT'S, TRAINING AT U.S. SCHOOLS AND THE LIKE WILL HAVE TO PLAY THE MAJOR ROLE IN THE RELATIONSHIP UNDER CURRENT CONDITIONS. WE THINK THESE ARE IMPORTANT AND USEFUL ACTIVITIES. EXCHANGE POSITIONS IN PERU ARE USUALLY IN THE DOCTRINE FORMATION OR TEACHING AREAS WHERE MANY YOUNG AND MIDDLE GRADE OFFICERS ARE EXPOSED TO U.S. IDEAS. U.S. MILITARY SCHOOLS AND PERUVIAN EXCHANGE POSITIONS IN THE U.S. PROVIDE NOT ONLY HIGH CALIBER PROFESSIONAL TRAINING, BUT ALSO EXPOSE THE TRAINEE AND OFTEN HIS FAMILY TO MANY FACETS OF AMERICAN LIFE. THIS ALMOST EVERY CASE IS POSITIVE AND EDUCATIVE WHEN THE TRAINEE RETURNS HOME AND DISCUSSES HIS EXPERIENCE WITH HIS FAMILY AND FRIENDS. MOBILE TRAINING TEAMS OFTEN REACH GREATER NUMBERS OF STUDENTS AND PROVIDE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR FRATERNIZATION AND EXCHANGE OF PROFESSIONAL IDEAS DURING DUTY AND OFF-DUTY HOURS. THE CAEM ORIENTATION TOUR,
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PAGE 05 LIMA 00921 312337Z

EVEN THOUGH RELATIVELY SHORT, IS WARMLY REMEMBERED AND FREQUENTLY MENTIONED BY MOST CAEM PARTICIPANTS,WHO OFTEN SUBSEQUENTLY OCCUPY KEY POSTIONS IN THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT, AND CIVILIAN COMMUNITIES.

2.F. THE GOP IS PLEDGED TO A MORTATORIUM ON ARMS PURCHASES TO THE YEAR 1980. THE CHANCES ARE REASONABLE GOOD THAT THIS COMMITMENT WILL BE MET. WHEN AND IF THE PERUVIAN DO BEGIN BUYING AGAIN, THEY CANBE EXPECTED TO GO WHERE THEIR FINANCIAL CONDITION PERMITS THEM TO GO. UNDER PREVALIING CONDITIONS THAT MEANS THE SOVIET UNION FOR MAJOR ACQUISITIONS.

3. CONCLUSION: WE BELIEVE REASONABLE SATISFACTORY MILITARY RELATIONS CAN BE MAINTAINED WITH THIS COUNTRY ON THE BASIS OF THE CURRENT LEVEL OF ACTIVITY. BUT, AS THE PAST INSTRUCTS US, THE RELATIONSHIP IS INHERENTLY FRAGILE AND, IN THE ABSENCE OF PERUVIAN EXPECTATIONS OF FORTHCOMING ARMS TRANSFERS, SUBJECT TO SUDDEN DETERIORATION. WE WOULD PARTICULARLY CAUTION AGAINST ATTEMPTS TO USE OUR MODEST MILITARY PROGRAM AS LEVERAGE OR PUNISHMENT IN THE ABSENCE OF OBVIOUS PERUVIAN BAD FAITH. SHALDDDEMAN

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